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## THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION OF NATIONAL AFFAIRS.

BY EX-SPEAKER REED.

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THE present administration has been in power a year and four months. This would ordinarily be a very short period by which to judge of its value to the people of this country. But since March, 1893, events have moved so rapidly and have been of such serious import that most men's minds are already settled as to the verdict which will be rendered whenever the opportunity is offered.

In fact, the verdict, so far as that means the concentrated opinion of men everywhere, has already been rendered. So uniform has been the expression of opinion that all who speak to the people on this subject are entirely relieved from the need of arguing the question, and are forced to confine themselves to mere comment, unable even in that to avail themselves of the things which were most striking because those things have been worn out by the tireless discussion which has ensued. We have had plenty of leisure for discussion. Business has not distracted our thoughts.

It is true that the course of human history shows many changes from prosperity to adversity, and perhaps it is too much to hope that the time will ever come when the race will be exempt from periodic disaster even as severe as that which is upon us now. Nevertheless, if we are ever to have a more uni-

form course of prosperity, it must come from such consideration as we may be able to give to the causes which lead to our misfortunes and the incidents which attend them. Knowledge of the disease is the first preliminary to the invention of remedies. Party government being so evidently the sole kind of government possible in any country at all free or civilized, it is strange that men do not grasp the idea and keep it always in their minds that what governs a country is not the individual or individuals who occupy prominent places, but the party which surrounds and supports them ; the party, the sentiments of which are really the guiding and controlling force. Human beings are so constituted that each leans upon the other, and all upon each. Of course the sentiments of the party out of office are not without their force, even upon those apparently holding the reins of power ; but the main impulse for good or ill comes to an administration from those which immediately surround it. It has in itself very little original power. Of course it may get strength from the whole people, and that strength on particular things may be so great that party may be overridden and measures may become law which party policy does not dictate, but this can only be when the party itself is so discordant and broken that it can hardly be called a party.

For many years the Republican party, under administration after administration, pursued a course so proper and suitable as a whole that the deserved praise bestowed upon it became a rock of offence, and the sneer injected into the words "pointing with pride," which we had justly placed in our platforms, did us more harm than our good works could cancel. In this envious world more than one Aristides has gone into banishment because the world got tired of hearing him called the Just.

When the Democratic party came into power there were not a few of those who had voted against it who gave themselves some consolation in the hope that the possession of power would work in that party a change which would be of advantage to the whole country. Being out of power a long time makes the members of a minority party unreasonable, suspicious, and incapable of those sensible allowances which must be made for the shortcomings of those in office. They get to think of their opponents not as misguided, but as wicked. Nor can you ever entirely exclude a minority from influence. Even their unjust out-

cries have their effect. Hence there were those who hoped that an experience of the difficulties of government would so press upon the newcomers, that, steadied by due sense of responsibility, they would unite upon some reasonable course of conduct which, while it might not be of the best, would at least not be of the worst.

This consolatory hope has hardly been realized, and yet the experience which the Democracy have had in misgoverning the country, conjoined with that rebuke which the country seems so likely to administer promptly at the first opportunity, may secure to us hereafter an opposition less gangrened with envy and more reasonable in its estimate of the doings of those who have the problems of government to solve and its responsibilities to encounter.

At the same time the country at large, and especially those men who pride themselves on being above partisanship, will learn that there are odds in parties, and that it is not the proper subject of a toss-up which they will have.

Of course, we all knew as a matter of theoretical knowledge that the only way in which its ablest leader could seem to bring his party under one tent was to invent that charming phrase, "I am a Democrat," which served at once as a designation and an evasion ; but we were very far from having a realizing sense of the real discord which reigned throughout. It is not by words, but by actions, that men show what they think.

It has been owing to this discord and lack of agreement among their opponents the past year that those who were the rulers of this country from 1861 to 1893 have been able to show to the people that whether in power or out of power they have the same good sense which rendered the history of the American people between those dates a history of prosperity and progress unequalled by any other thirty years. Whenever there has been any portion of the Democracy large enough to enable us to turn the scale to the side of right and good government, the Republican party has not been wanting to the country.

The history of the last year must have been a bitter disappointment to many good men who, not satisfied with a reasonable amount of good government, sought to find a future better than the past, by throwing themselves into the hands of a party which was and is the creation of pure opposition, a party which had

never been for anything in particular, but simply against everything in general. How these men could have hoped for anything but the dismal result which now darkens the country they are probably at this moment asking themselves with more of anger than of sorrow. Of course these men, and with them many partisans of long standing, are now repenting with exceeding bitterness of spirit. They are also bringing forth works meet for repentance. No election, however trivial, which gives men a chance to show their feelings has been neglected. Wherever the elections have been on a scale great enough, the disgust of the people has taken on the largest possible proportions, and the people have not failed to emphasize what they meant. In Oregon, where the Populists hoped to render the verdict uncertain, the voters have left no doubt and given no sign which could be mistaken.

What a horribly disappointed country it is, and has a right to be! Read over Mr. Cleveland's inaugural, which perhaps contained his aspirations and the hopes he had of the future he was about to enter upon, and compare it with the events which have happened and those which are impending. Read the second paragraph of page 3 of the first volume of the *Record* of the Fifty-third Congress, in which the inaugural is published, and note the severe measure which was to be meted out to the "immense aggregations of kindred enterprises and combinations of business interests," which was the President's condensation of the word "trusts," and compare the hope with the fruition as shown in the Senate debate and the Senate vote of June 5th on the sugar schedule. Compare the homily on "paternalism" and the duty of having our "judgments unmoved by alluring phrases and unvexed by selfish interests," with the Jones amendments to the Tariff bill and the unerring certainty with which you can pick out the utterly unselfish interests which prompted their introduction and the particular senators who have laid their selfish interests a sacrifice on the altar of their Democracy.

The inaugural also attracts attention, upon rereading, by another phrase :

"When we tear aside," says the President, "the delusions and misconceptions which have blinded our countrymen to their condition under vicious tariff laws, we but show them how far they have been led away from the paths of contentment and prosperity." This was said March 4, 1893, when all mill wheels

were turning, factories were humming, trains were loaded, and the laborer was receiving the largest hire that labor ever knew on earth since Adam left Eden. Mr. Cleveland's administration and friends have certainly "torn aside" a good many "delusions and misconceptions," but, "blinded as our countrymen were to their condition under vicious tariff laws," they never mistook the Slough of Despond for the "paths of contentment and prosperity."

Another part of the inaugural contains some very fitting words in regard to the spoils system, intimating that offices should not be the rewards of partisan activity. Of course this also means that offices should not be used as rewards for legislative action, and we are all quite sure that the two letters of Senator Vest, recently published, which intimate that conformity to the President's views on matters of legislation is the indispensable prerequisite to the reception of a senator's "advice" as to offices in his own State, were erroneous as to fact or mistakes in discernment. We are quite sure also that the advice of Boston Democratic newspapers to use offices for purposes of legislation was never followed.

This REVIEW has not pages enough to contrast the inaugural, which was promise, with the facts, which are fulfillment.

We have very little to do with foreign nations, and there is nothing which troubles us less than our foreign affairs. Judging from what has happened in the little sphere in which we do move, it is lucky for us that rolling oceans, for the most part, divide us from the rest of the world.

If foreign affairs meant for us peace and war, trade and commerce, life and death, this country would have been in as bad a collapse of distrust as to diplomacy as it is as to business. Of course I have not the slightest design to rehearse the Hawaiian affair which excited so much just indignation, but has latterly fallen so dead that the country hardly noticed the other day the fact that the Senate in no ambiguous phrase reëchoed the demand of the country that the people of those islands should be let alone, and thereby administered to the administration that rebuke which would have been so much more valuable if it had been more prompt. It took the present Senate more than a year to come to the conclusion which the country reached on sight. The House, with Governor McCreary chairman of foreign affairs, is still sup-

porting the President. But the House is Democratic by one hundred majority, the Senate by only three. I commented some time ago in this REVIEW on the violation by the Wilson Bill of the principles laid down by the Democracy in convention assembled and made part of the platform which conducted their partisans to power. That lead has been followed throughout, and to-day almost all the other planks of that platform are swimming separate in the vast gulf of human misery which their promises mock, kept not even to the ear.

Washington, the State, is mourning over the swarm of Georgians newly imported into the offices there to show that home rule in a platform and home rule in practice do not go hand in hand, while Washington, the city, sees one of the best places placating a Kansas man who would take nothing else.

Last month, two days after the Oregon election, another distinctive plank was ripped off and flung into the stormy sea. Of course this is the best that could be done with it as with all the rest, but the event shows of how little value are all the declarations of a party which has no real union of principle and purpose. Nevertheless the defeat of a measure which had the deliberate sanction of the party in convention assembled, by a vote of 172 to 102 in a House where the strict party majority is eighty, and the real majority is one hundred, was an event significant of the untrustworthiness of those who did it. The way also in which the bill, which was made the vehicle to bring before the House the repeal of the State bank tax, was kicked into the waste basket afterwards, had in it a befitting touch of the ludicrous; so also had the fact that eight Democrats who two years ago before the convention met voted for repeal, turned round after it became a party pledge and voted against it. The House discussed the question a week and a half, and then the whole thing—bill, amendment, substitute, and all—disappeared, leaving not a wrack behind.

But all these things are small matters hardly worth the time already spent on them. The great crime of the present administration of affairs has been its treatment of the tariff question. The treatment commenced in the Democratic platform, with its wild denunciation of protection and fanatical indorsement of free trade. Had the people of this country taken the tirade seriously there would have been no trouble. Had anybody believed the Democratic party to be in earnest it would not have lived through

half the election day. But everybody thought it only a political manoeuvre, a last desperate attempt to beat Mr. Cleveland, and all but a few believed that the rejected plank, which had some sense in it, would be found to embody the real determination of the party when it went really into action. The protectionists in the Democratic party did not dream what a powerful weapon they were putting into the hands of their enemies, or how powerful the South was and how much the organization there was wedded to free trade, and how little the representatives from that section would listen to the established industries of the country. The old Southern Bourbons have been the bane of the Democratic party time out of mind. Naturally attaching themselves to it because it is farthest in the rear, they drag it backward, and, whenever it is in power, the nation with it. In the present House, organized with a Southern man of that stamp in the chair, the Committee of Ways and Means was so composed that Northern industrial sentiment had little influence, so little that the only representative of Northern manufactures allowed on the list refused to vote for the results of their labors.

It is too late to discuss the bill which they presented to the House. The country has discussed it fully and has made up its opinion thereon. So bad was it, even from the Democratic standpoint, that the Senate Finance Committee, even with all the changes they could make themselves, were compelled, as soon as the result of their lucubrations saw the light of day, to propose more than four hundred changes before the most brisk traffic that the history of legislation ever saw could make it possible to secure its passage, and even that has not been enough, for more than one day has witnessed the adoption of amendments the sole purpose of which was to obtain votes by the use of those "alluring phrases" and "selfish interests" which the inaugural so feelingly deprecated. The lovely programme of "free raw material," an "alluring phrase" which was to captivate New England, has given place to those "selfish interests" of senators who demanded "taxed" coal and "taxed" iron ore, while the farmers' wool was despised both as a source of revenue and as a proper subject for protection.

Perhaps the most surprising exhibition of all has been the conduct of the Senate on the sugar question. The protection of sugar refining might be justifiable, and was justifiable on the prin-



ciple that so great an article of consumption should be brought to the market by American labor, and that in this, as in all other products, this nation should do its own work and preserve its own market for its own people. So also a people who desired to produce the raw material of an article which has become such a necessity of modern civilized life as sugar has, might well bestow the public money in the form of bounties to establish an industry at once profitable and indispensable. Those who contended for protection as a principle of national growth in wealth and power, could well afford to sustain all reasonable efforts to make us independent of foreign producers. But that those who denounce all protection as robbery, who proclaim it on all occasions and in every instance to be class legislation, could by a solid party vote not only tax the people perhaps for all time for the benefit of a portion of a single State, but give these *protégés* a year's bounty besides, passes all human understanding; when you add to that the fact that the greater part of that portion of the tax which falls to the refiners will inure to the benefit of one of those "immense aggregations of kindred enterprises and combinations of business interests formed for the purpose of limiting production and fixing prices," which were so denounced in the inaugural, the performance, if it receives the Presidential sanction, will pass all human language. Without trenching for a moment on the province of the investigating committee of the Senate now at work, it will not be unjust to say that all this, so utterly inconsistent with all former and all present professions, was done because some senators representing their constituents were not in the least moved by the "alluring phrases" of the Democratic platform, but laid hard hold upon those "selfish interests" with which the President thought we would be "unvexed."

The sugar clauses were not for revenue only. They had a commercial value, when translated into votes, which could not be resisted. I do not refer to any scandal or make any insinuation of that nature. The only reference is to the use of those log-rolling means from which tariff reform was to free us. The revenue was not needed, for the income tax was always claimed to be ample to supply the deficit, and if the friends of the bill are to be believed we tax the people of this country, and create a surplus, not to supply its needs, but to obtain votes by appeals to selfish interests and those entirely local. Is not this something which recalls the

words "culminating atrocity of class legislation"? How unfortunate it is for a party to have gone into action with so large and interesting a vocabulary—"culminating atrocity of class legislation," "fraud," "robbery," "paternalism," "selfish interests." How queer they look now, those children of the swiftly vibrating tongue as they lie side by side in their last resting-places. They were lovely in their lives, and in their death they were not divided.

The limits of this article preclude any full discussion of the action of the Senate, and such a discussion in the liveliest hands would be wearisome. Hence one can only touch upon the points most salient, the points which have special significance. Nothing shows better than the cotton schedule the care which the Southern men have for their own industries. "Ad valorem" does not predominate there, and yet cottons are sostable in their character that they need specifics as little as any thing on the list. Contrast this treatment with that which woollens receive, and you will realize that while sectionalism may be rebuked in words it may reign triumphant in deeds. There, among woollens, where specifics are most demanded by practical men, where undervaluations are the most dangerous, "ad valorems" lead the way to fraud and the destruction of industries. If those two schedules should ever become law, watch the effect, and then see that sectionalism never again gets into our laws. We in the North are anxious that the South should be prosperous. We are thus anxious for a sounder reason than sentimentalism, we do not say it as an alluring phrase, but are incited by wisely selfish interests which are incentives to human progress. We wish the South prosperous, so that the South may think as we do and senseless bickerings may cease. And it is just as easy to bring the South to our industrial level as it is to lower us to theirs, and far more profitable to this nation. We do not therefore sorrow over anything the South may get in the proposed tariff bill, but rather rejoice. We could still more rejoice if all other industries all over the country were as well treated as cotton in the coarser grades. Cotton also in the finer work could bear the better treatment which we shall some day give it, to the great benefit of both North and South.

We do not complain that Southern rice is protected, but we cannot see just at what point of southern latitude the robbery involved in protection to agricultural products melts off and is ab-

sorbed in what seems to be a universal solvent, the tariff for revenue only, which renders it both pure and peaceable.

Of the effects which this choice of Democracy for the government of the country has had upon wages and labor I shall not speak. Not one single word is needed. Those whom this aspect of the question concerns know better what it means than any human being can tell them. I only pause to note that that problem of lowering wages to meet prices, which seemed to free traders prating about "lower prices to consumers" so easy to solve a half-year ago, does not grow any less difficult of solution as the days go by.

Who is responsible for all this and the hundred more things which might have been described? Some of those gentlemen who helped to create the great fame which the president had in his former administration charge it upon him and declare that he, single handed and alone, could have prevented all these disasters and created that ideal republic which four years ago came out of the horn gate of dreams and clothed itself in his language and theirs. How unkind and unjust all this is. Why cannot these men see, for they assisted, that all that the president created four years ago was created not with stone and iron and mortar, but with the pencil and the ruler. A loftier pyramid than either of the three that stand majestic on Egyptian sands can tower on the smallest piece of white paper. But real pyramids mean stone and struggle and sweat of men. They mean not only the king, but Egyptians swarming to do the work. The work these modern Egyptians are swarming to do is not the building of eternal pyramids, but the strewing of the shifting sands which lie at their feet.

How long will it be before the children of this Republic rise to the full knowledge of their faith and rest on the foundation-stone of their institutions, that no one man can make or mar, but that all the people finally come, and are the only Daniel that does finally come, to judgment.

It is true that the last year demonstrates how careless the judgment of our Daniel may sometimes be, and how great are the costs and charges of his court, but there is always an appeal, and to-day neither suitor doubts what the next judgment is to be.

THOMAS B. REED.